MIGRATION AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Materialities of Governance and Development



EDITED BY

ỌLÁYÍNKÁ ÀKÀNLE

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University of Ibadan, Nigeria and University of Johannesburg, South Africa



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To God Almighty – The Alpha and The Omega

To my darling wife – Dr. Olufunmilola Esther Akanle

To my son – Mr. Emmanuel ImoleOluwa Akanle

To my daughters – AnjolaOluwa Elizabeth Akanle and AraOluwa Stella Akanle

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Contents

About the Editor *ix*

About the Contributors *xi*

Acknowledgement *xv*

Chapter 1 Answering the Governance and Development Question: Migration, the African Diaspora and Materialities *1*
Ọláyínká Àkànle

Section One: Remittance, Climate Change and Development

Chapter 2 Remittance Leakage and the Migration–Gambling Nexus: Rethinking Family Economies in Africa *11*
Rowland Edet and Beulah Suleman

Chapter 3 Climate Change–Migration Nexus in Africa: Evidence from Mediation and Moderation Analyses *35*
Joshua Adeyemi Afolabi, Isiaka Akande Raifu and Damian Chidozie Uzoma-Nwosu

Chapter 4 Development Impacts of International Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa *63*
Ọláyínká Àkànle, Tirimisiyu Yemi Olabulo and Goodluck Uzieyi

Section Two: Migration, Gender and the Lived Experiences of African Diaspora

Chapter 5 Imagining Canada: Hope, Networks and Imagined Futures Among Prospective African Skilled Migrants *85*
Ashika Niraula

Chapter 6 Gendered Health Experiences of African Immigrant Women in Canada: The Case of Nigerian Women *109*
Olayinka Damilola Ola-Lawson and Ọláyínká Àkànle

Chapter 7 Modern Slavery, Agents' Mistreatment, and International Migration of Kenyans to the Middle East *135*
Rebecca Chepkoech Barno

Chapter 8 *Black Tax:* The Experiences and Obligations of African Migrants to Their Left-Behind Families *163*
Demilade Ifeoluwa Kayode and Dauda A. Busari

Section Three: African Diaspora Engagement and Frameworks

Chapter 9 The Illusion of Belonging and Reciprocity: Diaspora Engagement Policies of African States as Vehicles for Extractive Relationships *189*
Theophilus Kwabena Abutima, Patrick Yirenkyi Amoah and Leander Kandilige

Chapter 10 Migration, Diaspora and the Existential Condition of African Migrants in the African Union's Migration Frameworks *217*
Aniekeme Antia and Tunde A. Alabi

Chapter 11 Fundamentals for Sustainability of Africa: The Migration, African Diaspora, Governance and Development Calculus *237*
Ọláyínká Àkànle

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Chapter 1

Answering the Governance and Development Question: Migration, the African Diaspora and Materialities

Ọláyínká Àkànle

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Context and Activation

There is no doubt that international migration and the diaspora are defining characters of Africa. In fact, it is impossible to understand Africa without significant attention to its global migration and the diaspora footprints. Across histories, beginning from the precolonial times, migration and the diaspora have been central to African existences (Akyeampong, 2000; Falola, 2024). Key points in migration and the African diaspora materialities are voluntary movements and forced displacements. These can be seen in trade routes, transatlantic slave trade, conflicts and wars, climate change, globalisation and global political economy (Falola, 2024). While the diaspora is often traceable to migration and usually represented as demographic shifts and results, the African diaspora is more unique, more complicated and essentially more complex (Rotimi et al., 2016). The African diaspora is increasingly an identity, an instrumentality, a social category, a cultural formation, a crucial development network, a hope, an aspiration, a transnational governance system, an emerging institution, an international behavioural expectation and a practical group. It is within this fundamentally strategic migration and unique, yet complex, African diaspora that the governance and development question emerges, and must be answered.

A key contribution of this book is the advancement of knowledge through emphasis on the strategic importance of the intersections of international migration and the African diaspora for development within the framework of sustainable governance of the intersections. To strengthen this book, multidisciplinary approach was adopted with careful selection and deliberate curation of theoretical, normative and empirical studies/chapters. These are chapters that

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are very relevant for scholarship, policy and practice. This book is particularly very relevant through foregrounding of themes in manners that establish interconnections and bridge analytical divides. This method provides well integrated and coordinated perspectives and experiences of Africans as they move globally and as they establish active and flourishing diaspora worldwide.

This book activates and enlivens crucial issues of migration and the diaspora that are often, hitherto, treated as abstract especially relative to governance and development. This activation and bringing to life of the themes are the materialities because international migration, the diaspora, governance and development are real and active issues affecting people. In fact, they are people and should be considered in manners that they affect people rather than as mere abstract terms and concepts. In this context, materialities are the tangible and active processes, patterns, elements, consequences, outcomes and impacts of international migration and the diaspora on the development of Africa and the roles governance play in this. Africa currently struggles with development. This is as poverty, unemployment, insecurity and misgovernance, among others, persist. As the traditional and persistent problem of underdevelopment in Africa persists, can international migration and the diaspora intervene in some ways? This is an original and important poser as international migration of Africans continues to increase, the African diaspora continues to burgeon and development of the continent continues to be problematic even in the face of abundant natural and human resources.

The materialities are key because Africa is in dire need of improved material conditions that are existential and consistent in many respects. Materialities are the realities. They come with international migration and the African diaspora. These can be seen in the increasing remittances to Africa from international migrants and the diaspora. These can also be seen in rural transformations, homeland development, urban renewal, established diaspora investments, transnational trades and increasing economic geographies that continue to link African businesses to global market. Digital technology and social medial also play active roles in the materialities of migration and the African diaspora on the continent (Akanle et al., 2021). Materialities establish the importance of transforming the elements of migration and the diaspora to existential material conditions that are not accidental and incidental but that are determined, intentional, experiential and sustainable in terms of governance and development. This is the key consideration of this book. The intentionalities of transforming international migration and the African diaspora to development strategies for Africa. This is with deliberate governance approaches that can jumpstart, drive and sustain development of Africans on the continent and beyond.

While governance is commonly framed and narrated within the remit of state policies like laws and agreements, migration and diaspora governance here are beyond the state. While African states/governments have central roles to play in migration and diaspora governance, governance here is more inclusive, more diffused and more multi-layered to factor in the roles and activities of non-state actors. These include religious organisations, community associations and

digital/internet/social medial communities like groups on WhatsApp, Forum, Blogs, Instagram, Telegram, Facebook and TikTok. Other non-state actors in the governance ecosystem are kinship and social networks of migrants and the diaspora (Akanle, 2013). More actors in the migration and the diaspora governance of Africa include international agencies and institutions, organised private sector, governments of migrants receiving countries, diaspora associations and migrants themselves. The governance nodes are very central and crucial if migration and the diaspora will ever translate to development of Africa. The chapters in this book make this position very clear. These state and non-state actors collectively and individually govern migration and the diaspora directly and indirectly, positively and negatively one way or the other. Through their actions and inactions and omission and commission, they govern and impact development and this is very serious.

Unfortunately, often times, the agents and actors in the migration and diaspora governance ecosystem act in manners that negate capacities to translate migration and the diaspora to engines of development. Such negative actions include the exclusionary, dependency, *black tax* phenomenon and extractive relationships as demonstrated in chapters in this book. It is therefore high time state and non-state actors in the governance value chains of Africa began to act positively and with discretion so as to optimise migration and the diaspora for the development of Africa in manners that are sustainable. Impactful governance, in this context, therefore transcends the usual formal state-centric systems and considerations. It includes the informal relational systems that are equally impactful, and sometimes even more impactful than the formal governance in Africa. Both the state and non-state actors and institutions exert a measure of control and authority on migration and activities of the diaspora and decision-making processes and this have implications for the development of Africa.

While the policy and academic debates around migration, the diaspora and development nexus have been raging for long, very few books have addressed the debates within materialities and governance framework. Works are particularly little on this in Africa. Most of the existing works are sharply divided along the celebratory/optimistic and pessimistic orientations, models and perspectives. This book, however, provides a more practical, more pragmatic, more balanced and more nuanced approach that appreciates and recognises the complexities, heterogeneities, context-specific and context-dependent consequences, implications and impacts of migration and the diaspora on Africa.

Migration and the diaspora are important for the development of Africa. They continue to contribute to the development of the continent in multiplicities of ways. These contributions are however, largely, piecemeal, uncoordinated and without strategically and intentionally calibrated governance architectures and frameworks that can achieve development sustainably. Examples in and across Asia, based on the experiences of China and India for instance, suggest it may be impossible to sufficiently optimise the gains of migration and the diaspora for development without intentional, strong and effective governance frameworks. Migration and the African diaspora are contributing to the development of the

continent in contradictory ways. These ways are through remittances, philanthropy, investments and exchange of expertise and ideas (brain gain). On the other hand, migration and the African diaspora are also, expropriating skills (brain drain) and capital, for example, from the continent. To balance this equation in manners that Africa does not lose in the long run, strong multi-level strategic governance systems and apparatuses are urgently needed.

This is particularly so as even the positive contributions of migration and the African diaspora are unevenly spread on the continent. Hence, the impacts of the positive contributions may not be sustainable, if care is not taken. This is because structural issues and behavioural problems are militating against the transformative and sustainable impacts of the contributions. The militating structural issues and behavioural problems are barriers to development. They include culture of dependency, development of high taste and consumerism in migrants and diaspora households in Africa, complicated financial systems, unfavourable government policies, political instability and misgovernance in Africa and individual countries of origin.

Structure of the Book

The book is deliberately curated around thematic sections and chapters that reflect its core analysis and objective. This is to guarantee coherence and clarity. The book is divided into three broad sections. Section One is *Remittance, Climate Change and Development.* Section Two is *Migration, Gender and the Lived Experiences of African Diaspora*. Section Three is *African Diaspora Engagement and Frameworks*. Chapters are organised under relevant sections. Aside the sections and the chapters under them, there is an introductory chapter (Chapter 1) and a concluding chapter (Chapter 11) for the book. There are 11 chapters in total in the book. The Chapter 1 is *Answering the Governance and Development Question: Migration, the African Diaspora and Materialities*. The chapter sets the tone for the book, contextualises the book and explains the structure of the book.

Chapter 2 is *Remittance Leakage and the Migration–Gambling Nexus: Rethinking Family Economies in Africa* by Rowland Edet and Beulah Suleman. According to the chapter, gambling has become a significant social and economic phenomenon in Africa, particularly in the context of migration and family dynamics. The rapid growth of the gambling industry across sub-Saharan Africa is attributed to various factors, including increased access to digital finance and the internet, which has made gambling more accessible, especially among urban youth populations. However, this evolution has been driven by socio-economic factors, including urbanisation and migration, which have altered traditional family dynamics and introduced new challenges. The socio-economic backdrop, characterised by high unemployment and poverty, contributes to the perception of gambling as a potential source of income, particularly among migrants seeking better opportunities in urban areas. This chapter, through critical review, employs behavioural economics and social psychology as theoretical

frameworks, emphasising how cultural and migratory contexts shape gambling behaviours and their associated harms. The author synthesises data from surveys, case studies and interviews across African nations to explore the nuanced experiences of families affected by gambling focusing on lived experiences to provide insights into the emotional and financial toll of gambling on family structures, particularly in the context of migration.

Chapter 3 is *Climate Change–Migration Nexus in Africa: Evidence from Mediation and Moderation Effect Analyses* by Joshua Adeyemi Afolabi, Isiaka Akande Raifu and Damian Chidozie Uzoma-Nwosu. The chapter investigates the climate change–migration nexus in Africa by examining both the transmission mechanisms through which climate change influences forced migration and the moderating role of green finance in shaping this relationship. Using panel data for 36 African countries, the analysis applies mediation and moderation frameworks within static and dynamic estimation techniques. The mediation results show that climate change does not exert a uniform direct effect on forced migration, but through agriculture systems. Using temperature anomaly as a proxy for climate change, crop production fully mediates the relationship. Under an alternative specification using CO2 emissions per capita, the mediation effect is partial and competitive, as emissions directly reduce forced migration, likely reflecting higher adaptive capacity, but indirectly increase displacement through agricultural restructuring. The moderation analysis reveals that green finance plays a conditional role. While static models suggest that green finance may increase forced migration, dynamic model results indicate that green finance significantly reduces forced migration and weakens the adverse impact of climate anomalies. Policies aimed at reducing climate-induced displacement must, therefore, prioritise agricultural resilience, inclusive structural transformation and well-governed green finance mechanisms to strengthen adaptive capacity and break persistent migration cycles.

Chapter 4 is *Development Impacts of International Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa* by Ọláyínká Àkànle, Tirimisiyu Yemi Olabulo and Goodluck Uzieyi. The chapter offers interesting, exciting and current perspectives relative to international migration in Sub-Saharan African countries. This is because, over the years, there have been researches and several books on global and African migrations, migration realities and impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa are, however, underrepresented in the migration studies literature. This chapter adopted primary insights, secondary data and autoethnography as methodology to offer fresh and nuanced explanations and unearth new findings on the intersectionalities of drivers, flows and development impacts of International Migration in the sub-continent. The next chapter is by Ashika Niraula on *Imagining Canada: Hope, Networks and Imagined Futures among Prospective African Skilled Migrants.* The chapter examines how prospective African skilled migrants imagine destination countries, such as Canada, and how these imaginaries are formed, circulated and acted upon in everyday life. Based on 19 in-depth interviews with prospective African skilled migrants, it explores the role of social media, intermediaries and transnational networks in shaping migrants' understandings of migration, opportunity and future-making. Rather than

passively receiving information, these migrants actively navigate fragmented, uneven and sometimes contradictory forms of migration-related information produced across digital spaces, policy frameworks and informal networks. The findings show that destination countries such as Canada are frequently imagined as sites of dignity, professional recognition and long-term security for families. At the same time, migrants are aware of bureaucratic uncertainty, financial risk and the possibility of rejection.

Chapter 6 is *Gendered Health Experiences of African Immigrant Women in Canada: The Case of Nigerian Women* by Olayinka Damilola Ola-Lawson and Ọláyínká Àkànle. According to the chapter, African immigrants remain one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the world. Particularly, African women constitute half of immigrants in the global north. However, healthcare access remains a key barrier that contributes to health challenges among African immigrant population. This chapter explores the lived experiences of African immigrant women in accessing healthcare services in Canada through the case study of Nigerian immigrant women in the country. The study that informed the chapter was guided by intersectionality theory. Exploratory design was used to examine the barriers of healthcare access and health outcomes of immigrants. Data were collected using qualitative methods of in-depth, semi structured interviews of about 20–60 minutes with 20 Nigerian immigrant women in Canada. The study was analysed using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). Quotes elicited were further analysed through thematic and content analysis that were drawn from the objectives. Best practice in ethical research was strictly adhered to throughout the study. Findings show that the immigrant women face serious access barriers including delayed medical response, perceived racial insensitivity, lack of provincial health insurance coverage, inaccessible regular care, systemic inefficiencies, selective care, high cost of healthcare services, immigration status, length of stay and language barrier. Implications for these challenges lead to outcomes, including medical dismissal, gendered power dynamics, physical and emotional stress and misdiagnosis. Coping strategies often utilised by the immigrant women include overreliance on emergency services and navigating uncertainty through institutional support. Therefore, effective policy frameworks are needed to be established within the healthcare system. The frameworks should be gender-responsive, trauma-informed and provide accessible services for immigrant women.

Chapter 7 is *Modern Slavery, Agents' Mistreatment and International Migration of Kenyans to the Middle East* by Rebecca Chepkoech Barno. The chapter is particularly important because it sheds light on the usually taken for granted roles of agents in precarious migration of Africans. The chapter is also a major contribution to knowledge because it opens understanding of precarious migration of Africans in context of modern slavery in emerging migration corridor of the Middle East. Chapter 8 is *Black Tax: The Experiences and obligations of African Migrants to their Left-behind Families* by Demilade Ifeoluwa Aboderin and Dauda A. Busari. According to the chapter, the concept of black tax defined as a financial burden carried by black people that have obtained some level of success and provide financial support to less financially secured family

members has been absorbed in migration and remittance discourse. In Sub-Sahara Africa, the cultural orientation binding the family system has made these transactions seem like an expectation and obligation situationship. These might not necessarily be the state of existentiality for non-Africa migrants whose cultural orientation elucidate individualisation over collectivity. It is against this background that the chapter uncovered the experiences of African migrants in sending remittances to left-behind family members, how the experiences differ from non-African migrants and how these lived experiences affect their well-being abroad.

Chapter 9 is *The Illusion of Belonging and Reciprocity: Diaspora Engagement Policies of African States as Vehicles for Extractive Relationships* by Theophilus Kwabena Abutima, Patrick Yirenkyi Amoah and Leander Kandilige. This chapter is very particularly governance oriented in context of diaspora engagement. For the authors, international migration is increasingly associated with mobilisation of development generating resources to assist the faltering economies in countries of origin. Within this discourse, the prominent contribution of diaspora communities has been widely appreciated as a driving force. To systematise the role of the diaspora, African countries have been nudged by European development partners and their intermediaries to draft diaspora engagement policies. Despite the fact that the operative word is 'engagement', almost all such policies are skewed in favour of extracting as much remittance income as possible from the diaspora while extending very few benefits and rights to the diaspora. Using the Diaspora Engagement Policy of Ghana as a case study, this chapter examines the policymaking processes, the goal and priority areas of such policies on the African continent.

Chapter 10 is *Migration, Diaspora and the Existential Condition of African Migrants in the African Union's Migration Frameworks* by Antia Aniekeme and Tunde A. Alabi. According to the authors, migration across borders is a key concern for the governance and development agenda in Africa. Existing literature on migration has explored migrant lived experiences and the institutionalisation of African migration governance. However, while policy-oriented research discusses the African Union (AU) migration frameworks in predominantly mobility management, regional integration and development goals, relatively little research has examined the relationships between these frameworks and migrants' lived experiences of belonging, displacement and identity. Consequently, the experiential and existential implications of African migration governance still receive little academic attention. This paper reviews the conceptualisation of migration and diaspora in AU migration frameworks and their relation to the lived experiences of uncertainty, displacement and belonging among African migrants within continental governance structures. It sheds light on conflicts between policy-oriented conceptualisations of migration and the lived experiences of migrants living with displacement, alienation and ontological insecurity. The study used secondary data and content analysis of the policy frameworks of the AU Agenda 2063, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the Free Movement Protocol.

The title of Chapter 11 is *Fundamentals for Sustainability of Africa: The Migration, African Diaspora, Governance and Development Calculus*.

This book makes profound cross-cutting and transdisciplinary contributions to scholarship, academics, policy and practice. In many fundamental ways, the book contributes to African studies, Migration studies, Diaspora studies, Development studies, Gender studies, Sociology and Political economy. This book de-centres and re-centres knowledge of, and knowledge on, Africa by emphasising orientations, perspectives and lived experiences of Africans in manners that give more balanced understanding and reshape global knowledge production asymmetry on, and about, Africa. This is very important because Migration studies and Diaspora studies are at critical juncture of increasing politicisation, deliberate over-sensationalisation and institutionalised over-misrepresentation. While the intersection of migration, diaspora, governance and development is very complex and complicated, this book boldly engages the transformative capabilities of migration and the diaspora for development of Africa.

The book makes comprehensive contributions by factoring in, and integrating, micro, meso and macro dimensions and elements into the analysis of migration of Africans and the African diaspora. This book stands at the authoritative nexus of scholarship, academic, expertise, policy and practice. The book is theoretically sound, empirically authoritative and practically very useful on its subject matter.

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